C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 JERUSALEM 000757

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NEA FOR FRONT OFFICE, NSC FOR ABRAMS/SINGH/PASCUAL

E.O. 12958: DECL: 05/06/2018
TAGS: KWBG PINS IS PGOV PTER
SUBJECT: JENIN: PASF EXCHANGE FIRE WITH GUNMEN IN QABATIYA,
CONTINUE ARRESTS/VEHICLE SEIZURES

REF: JERUSALEM 753

Classified By: Consul General Jake Walles, for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

¶1. (C) Summary. PA security forces (PASF) clashed with
gunmen in Qabatiya on May 6, with a bystander killed and two
PIJ activists injured in separate exchanges of gunfire.
Security contacts report that a PASF patrol was attacked with
a pipe bomb and pelted with stones. West Bank National
Security Forces (NSF) commander MG Thiab Ali said he will
request IDF clearance to move additional NSF soldiers into
Jenin from Jericho and Ramallah. PA Military Intelligence
(Istikhbarat) officers report they arrested an AWOL NSF
officer with militant ties in Qabatiya on May 6 and are
seeking to arrest other rogue PASF officers, most notably
al-Aqsa Brigades leader Nassir Khzaymih, who publicly
threatened to assassinate the Jenin police chief on May 6.
NSF/police contacts report seizing 20 more
unregistered/stolen cars and that Jenin courts have closed
files on 82 criminal cases since May 3. End summary.

Qabatiya: Gunmen Fire, Throw Pipe Bomb
at PG/NSF Patrol, Student Killed

¶2. (C) A 400-man PG/NSF/riot police force is controlling
Qabatiya's entrances and conducting patrols on major streets
as of 1500 local. According to West Bank NSF commander MG
Thiab Ali, a 200-man NSF/Presidential Guards (PG) force
entered Qabatiya early May 6 and at about 0500 briefly came
under fire from 1-2 unknown gunmen. The PASF returned fire
and the gunmen fled. A bystander, 21-year-old university
student Mu,min Fawaz Kmayl, was shot in the head during the
exchange (unclear whether by the gunmen or PASF) and later
died at a Nablus hospital. MG Ali said PASF have searched
several buildings but have not apprehended suspects in the
bystander's shooting. Jenin NSF commander BG Sulayman Imran
denied media reports that the shooting happened after the
PASF patrol had been pelted with stones, but acknowledged
that some youths had thrown stones at PASF inside Qabatiya
after the shooting. (Note: PG contacts report that PASF
briefly left most of Qabatiya mid-morning May 6 while
negotiations were underway with local clan leaders to reduce
tensions, but had returned by 1400. However, BG Imran denied
that PASF had left Qabatiya anytime after the shooting. End
note).

¶3. (C) Security contacts also report that two PG soldiers
were lightly injured at about 1100 local when a pipe bomb
exploded near their jeep, and that PG troops shot and injured
two PIJ activists at a checkpoint. A PIJ spokesman in
Qabatiya denied that any PIJ cells had attacked PASF patrols
and said PIJ supports the PA's law and order campaign.

¶4. (C) MG Ali said the PASF brought two more companies
(about 200 more men, for a total of 400) into Qabatiya

mid-morning and have a large presence in the neighborhood where the shooting occurred. He said most of the 485-man force that deployed on May 3 is committed to operations in Qabatiya, and he will request a few hundred more NSF soldiers and police ("as many as the IDF permits me to bring in") to allow simultaneous security actions.

PA Intel Arrests Rogue NSF Officer;
Al-Aqsa Brigades Threaten PASF Leaders

¶5.   (C) PA Military Intelligence (Istikhbarat) officers report they arrested AWOL NSF officer Nimr Shahadah al-Absi, who they said has militant (PIJ/PRC) ties, in Qabatiya on May 6 and took him to the Jenin Muqata'a to face military court charges. Istikhbarat officers say they are seeking to arrest other rogue PASF officers in Qabatiya (most al-Aqsa activists suspected of working with PIJ and/or receiving foreign money for terrorist activities), most notably al-Aqsa Brigades leader Nassir Khzaymih, who they said also has PIJ/PRC ties. For his part, Khzaymih publicly warned the PASF to stop targeting "resistance fighters" and threatened to assassinate Jenin police chief Wasim Jayyusi on May 6.

¶6.   (C) NSF contacts said cooperation with the Istikhbarat is excellent, but the NSF/police are trying to improve information sharing and coordinate all reconnaissance/arrest plans with Preventive Security (PSO) and the General Intelligence and get lists of wanted persons. MG Ali implied on May 5 that intelligence coordination had been imperfect so far and needs to improve.

PA Concludes Arrests/Seizures
in Jenin, Nearby Villages

¶7.   (SBU) Since 1600 on May 5, the NSF and police have been operating checkpoints on major roads inside Jenin with orders to seize armaments and unregistered vehicles. NSF, PG and police conducted presence patrols and raids in central/eastern Jenin and villages southwest of Jenin (Burqin, Bir al-Basha and al-Shuhada), arresting eleven wanted criminals and seizing 20 unregistered/stolen cars there. A pharmacy was burned in Jenin late May 5 (the perpetrators and their motivation are unknown).

82 Criminal Cases Closed

¶8.   (SBU) Police contacts report that Jenin's magistrate court has closed files on 82 criminal cases since May 3 as wanted persons responded to summonses. Most of the cases involved minor crimes for which no punishment or only fines were handed out after the suspects appeared in court.

Information Campaign: Emphasizing
the Operation's Palestinian Face

¶9.   (SBU) The PASF are trying to build public support for the security operation by distributing photos/footage of their enthusiastic public reception on May 2 and handing out fliers emphasizing that this is a Palestinian-ordered and)funded operation. The fliers provide a hotline to report criminal activity. Jenin Mufti Muhammad Salah instructed Jenin residents to obey the law and help the PA to achieve its security objectives.
WALLES